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ABSTRACT

This paper presents an elaboration of the ethical standards for the American Association for Counseling and Development found under Section H: Preparation Standards, which gives an outline of the issues and responsibilities of particular concern to individuals supervising counselors-in-training. Standards are considered in the context of a proposed counselor education program. Specific elements of the program pertinent to supervision are discussed, including didactic coursework and theoretical background, experiential learning, ethical considerations, hands-on counseling issues/experiences, and supervision. Experiential learning activities presented include role modeling and role playing, self-disclosure, and personal therapy. Ethical considerations examined include confidentiality, violent clients and duty to warn, self-destructive and suicidal clients, and vicarious liability. An outline of the various components believed to be integral in the enhancement of counselor effectiveness is provided. It is noted that, in addition to the specific issues mentioned, supervisors have several functions that span all facets of training and that, regarding counselors-in-training, supervisors need to monitor the welfare of clients, facilitate growth of trainees and trainee transition from stage to stage, and serve an evaluation function. (NB)

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ETHICAL ISSUES/RESPONSIBILITIES INVOLVED IN THE SUPERVISION AND TRAINING OF COUNSELORS

Submitted by

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ETHICAL ISSUES/RESPONSIBILITIES INVOLVED IN THE SUPERVISION AND TRAINING OF COUNSELORS

INTRODUCTION

The ethical standards for the American Association for Counseling and Development (AACD) under "Section H: Preparation Standards", provide guidelines concerning the training and supervision of individuals wishing to enter into the counseling field. "Section H" is an outline of the issues and responsibilities of particular concern to those persons given the charge of supervising counselors-in-training. The present paper is an elaboration of those standards in the context of a proposed counselor education program. Specific elements of the program pertinent to supervision include: Didactic coursework; Experiential experiences; Ethical considerations; Hands-On counseling issues/experiences; and, Supervision. It should be kept in mind that in addition to the specific issues mentioned, supervisors have a number of functions that span all facets of training. Regarding counselors-in-training, supervisors need to monitor the welfare of clients, facilitate growth of trainees in each of a number of stages, facilitate transition from stage to stage, and must serve an evaluation function (Loganbill, Hardy & Delworth, 1982).

DIDACTIC COURSEWORK

It should be apparent that there will come a time when counselors-in-training will be working as professionals without the benefit of the guidance offered through a counselor education program and may in fact be given the charge of supervising other counselors or para-professionals.

In preparation, it is believed to be critical that counselor education programs begin by providing a variety of theoretical perspectives, emphasize their similarities, differences, and potential applications. It is not believed to be possible, however, to provide trainees with intervention strategies for every possible situation they may encounter. Furthermore, it is the belief of this writer that it would not be appropriate to furnish this information even if it were available. It is expected that with an understanding of a variety of theoretical perspectives and an emphasis on core conditions of counseling (empathy, immediacy, confrontation, concreteness, genuineness, risk-taking, respect), the beginning counselor would start the process of forming his/her own philosophy of counseling. This, of course, will tend to be molded in part by the orientation of the counselor education program and the demonstration of theories by supervisors and instructors. Again, the role of didactic coursework is to expose trainees to a number of modes of counseling. The overriding concern in the demonstration of these various modes of counseling will always be the preparation of counselors-in-training to meet the needs of clients.

It is the belief of this writer that counselor education does not mean <u>teaching</u> counselors how to counsel but rather to provide opportunities for counselors-in-training to explore their anticipated profession. The tendency of counselors-in-training is to seek out predetermined "lesson plans" for approaching counseling situations because, perhaps, of fears of failure or insecurity about their newly acquired skills. It is the belief of this writer that feelings of uncertainty are important in perpetuating self-exploration and growth. Counselors-in-training can <u>learn</u> from supervisors, instructors, theorists, about the wealth of information within arms reach and use their

unique gifts, self-exploration, and introspection to confront the diverse situations ahead of them.

EXPERIENTIAL EXPERIENCES

Role Modeling/Playing

The issue of self-growth through introspection was mentioned earlier as being integral to counselors in training. This process tends to be enhanced through actual participation in various activities. The supervisor's role is that of creating situations where one can explore various components of counseling while remaining in a fairly structured environment. This is an opportune time for supervisors to model their particular theoretical orientation, providing both examples of both appropriate and inappropriate strategies useful in given situations. Through this process students can experience counseling, explore various facets of counseling, and actually participate through experimentation with various techniques. This enables the student to practice empathizing, reflecting, disclosing, confronting, as well as exploring what it means to create an atmosphere characterized by genuineness, immediacy, compassion, and caring. This is a critical opportunity for students to see how the core conditions of counseling can be applied and to see for themselves how they can apply them in a relatively safe environment. Feedback provided by supervisors and peers is essential and will assist the student in evolving into a more secure person, a more secure practitioner, and a more capable individual when confronted with their intial experiences with actual clients. This is also an opportune time for students to experience first hand the benefits to be gained through networking with peers and colleagues relative to feedback. It is hoped that these experiences

will also be cause for further introspection as the student continues to evaluate his/her place in the profession of counseling.

Self-Disclosure

There are a variety of issues pertaining to the inclusion and beneficial aspects of experiential experiences. A key ingredient to successful/useful experiential experiences is self-disclosure. According to Anderson and Bauer (1985), self-disclosure is a key factor in the development of intimacy. Experiential experiences intended to simulate facets of therapeutic relationships tend to involve intimacy, intimacy similar to that experienced in actual therapeutic sessions. This offers an opportunity for counselors-in-training to experience some of the intensity associated with many therapeutic relationships and then affords an opportunity to evaluate their own ability to deal with the emotions associated with self-disclosure. This should be the time when persons come to terms as to whether they can effectively function in situations involving intense emotions associated with self-disclosure.

There are a number of characteristics associated with effective self-disclosure that have resulted from research with the Bem Sex Role Inventory (Stokes, Childs, & Fuehrer, 1981). The findings indicate that:

1. reciprocity of disclosure is important
2. a secret of moderate intimacy enhances openness
3. the appropriate level of disclosure is important
4. people working in pairs are more likely to self-disclose than are people working in groups of three
5. both parties to a disclosure gain positive feelings
6. there are individual differences in attending to reactions of others and to expectations of social situations
7. acknowledging the responses of others can be a substitute for self-disclosure
8. men and women disclose in different ways

One implication of these findings is that by taking somewhat of a risk through self-disclosure, the counselor sets the stage for, and fosters self-disclosure

on the part of the client. The client tends to begin to think of the counselor as a genuine person rather then as some sort of a guru or "all-knowing" entity. This writer believes that the former scenario is more preferable then the later situation in which a "professional" void is created and fostered through the use of professional titles or anything else that draws attention to the fact the one individual is supposedly superior to another.

Personal Therapy

As Perrone and Sanborn (1966,p.63) have stated, "counselor behavior ought to be more a function of the person the counselor is rather than of his particular counselor education program". It seems to follow then that counselors-in-training should undertake a process of exploring who they are and what their capabilities are if they are to function effectively. One avenue to acquiring insight into oneself is through personal therapy. Loganbill, Hardy, and Delworth (1982) stated in their article entitled Supervision: A Conceptual Model that "people who are really effective generally go through a process of letting go of the belief that everything is all right with them". If counselors are to help individuals who are experiencing conflict then it seems to follow that the counselor needs to be aware of conflict going on inside of him/herself. Another beneficial aspect of personal therapy is that it enables the counselor-in-training to fully experience the process of change and growth characteristic of therapy. This in turn, should enable the counselor to be more empathic when functioning as a therapist and provide valuable insight into the struggles the client is experiencing as a result of change and growth.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Any person choosing to pursue a career in the helping professions should have a clear understanding of their ethical responsibilities as a professional. For the counselor-in-training there are a variety of sources pertaining to ethical standards as explicated by professional organizations (AACD, APA, etc.). This information is integral to the effective functioning of counselors but is not enough. This writer believes that there needs to exist an internal feeling pertaining to ethics, a moral obligation. As counselors we must be able to convey to our clients that the counseling sessions will be confidential, that they can feel safe in exploring a variety of sensitive issues, that others will not need to hear about the sessions unless the client takes that initiative.

Counselors-in-training, though understandably excited about having their first contact with actual clients, must remember that interactions between counselor and client are confidential and should not be discussed outside of supervision sessions or practicum meetings. It is therefore the responsibility of the supervisor to thoroughly address the issue of ethics and to model professional ethics.

In addition to evaluation, which will be discussed in a separate section, there are a variety of other major ethical issues that warrant more in-depth consideration because of their legal implications. The issue of malpractice is of great concern to the helping professional and the counselor-in-training should be aware of the implications of faulty diagnoses, improper commitment to the profession, improper application of therapy, promise of a cure, failure to warn, importance of accurate documentation, and importance of exercising adequate care with a suicidal client. The last two, duty to warn, and working with suicidal clients, will be explored in greater depth.

Duty to Warn

The issue referred to as "duty to warn" can best be discussed relative to the landmark case of Tarasoff v. Regents of the University of California. The following is a brief excerpt summarizing the above mentioned case according to Everstine et al. (1980):

> "On August 20, 1969, a man named Prosenjit Poddar, who was a voluntary outpatient at Cowell Memorial Hospital on the Berkeley campus, informed his therapist, a psychologist, that he was planning to kill a young woman. Poddar did not name the woman, but as established later, the psychologist could easily have inferred who she was. The murder was to be carried out when the woman returned to Berkeley from her summer vacation.
>
> Following this session, the psychologist telephoned the campus police to ask them to observe Poddar for possible hospitalization as a person who was "dangerous to himself or others"; he then wrote a letter, containing a formal request for assistance to the chief of the campus police. The campus officers took Poddar into custody for the pupose of questioning, but later released him when he gave evidence of being "rational". Soon afterward the psychologist's supervisor, Director of the Department of Psychiatry at Cowell Hospital, asked the campus police to return the psychologist's letter, ordered that the letter and therapy notes that had been made in Poddar's case be destroyed, and directed that no further action be taken to hospitalize Poddar. No warning was given either to the intended victim or to her parents. The client, naturally enough, did not resume his therapy.
>
> On October 27, 1969, Prosenjit Poddar killed Tatiana Tarasoff. The victim's parents filed suit against the Board of Regents of the university, several employees of Cowell Hospital, and the chief of the campus police plus four of his officers. A lower court dismissed the suit, the parents appealed, and the California Supreme Court upheld the appeal in 1974 and reaffirmed its decision in 1976. In July 1977, the suit was settled out of court and the Tarasoff family received a substantial award. Without public scrutiny, a bizarre tragedy had been adjudicated in camera, and a far-reaching and intensely value-laden controversy had been stifled by the fiat of legal precedent".

The Supreme Court held that it was not the failure of the psychologist or his supervisor to predict violence, but the failure to provide an adequate warning of violence to the intended victim or to her parents (Everstine et al., 1980).

The issue of confidentiality has undergone closer scrutiny since the Supreme Court decision. The Ethical Standards for the American Association for Counseling and Development reflect the results of the decision.

Specifically, "when the client's condition indicates that there is a clear and imminent danger to the client or others, the member must take reasonable personal action or inform reasonable authorities".

Suicidal Clients

The above mentioned cautions pertaining to dangerous clients and their potential for causing injury to others has not necessarily pertained to suicidal clients. The Supreme Court held in the case of Bellah v. Greenson (1978) that the implications of Tarasoff did not extend to a therapist whose patient was likely to commit suicide or merely to cause property damage. There is, however, a number of precautions a therapist must take when working with a suicidal client.

Through didactic coursework and experience, the counselor-in-training should arrive at an understanding of the dynamics of suicide. The therapist, when confronted with a potentially suicidal client, should have the necessary abilities to assess the lethality and potential of the client succeeding in his/her attempt. The case of Eady v. Alter (1976) was the first instance in which a student intern was sued, rather then the supervisor under the vicarious liability edict. The intern failed to monitor the client more closely and was therefore considered negligent when the client eventually succeeded in committing suicide. This is an example of how crucial adequate supervision is as well as an instance proving that supervision is not necessarily an absolute solution in gauging effectiveness of counselors-in-training.

Respondeat Superior

A final issue, very much related to the previously mentioned ethical issues, pertains specifically to a supervisors responsibility for supervisees

referred to as vicarious liablity, a special instance of respondeat superior. It should be clear by now that there are a variety of ethical issues helping professionals need to be aware of. The issue of respondeat superior, "let the master answer" (Snider, 1985), is a specific concern for anyone involved in the training or supervision of other helping professionals. Supervisors have an enormous responsibility regarding counselors-in-training, the clients trainees counsel, and the profession. As Cormier and Bernard (1982) have stated, "supervisors are ultimately legally responsible for the welfare of clients counseled by their supervisees". In order to insure the safety of clients, supervisors must be quite familiar with every case of every supervisee and this familiarity should be firsthand via observation, videotaping, or audiotaping. It is not believed to be sufficient to review case notes or reports of sessions.

Beyond the clear implications of supervision as it pertains to client safety, there is a professional concern. As supervisors, we have a professional obligation to be as certain as possible that graduates of counselor education training programs deserve to graduate. Competency-based evaluation is a necessary requirement if we are to effectively determine whether an individual has attained an appropriate level of professionalism. The determination of counseling effectiveness is a difficult decision but a decision that must be made if we are to protect potential clients and uphold the standards of our profession.

HANDS-ON COUNSELING ISSUES/EXPERIENCES

Crucial to the education of future counselors are opportunities for actual counseling experiences. Once a broad theoretical base has been established, there should be situations in which the student can integrate

theory and experiential experiences as they begin to counsel. Once again the client's welfare is of paramount importance. One way for students to gain experience in actual counseling situations is to have graduate students work in assigned pairs and have each person participate one hour a week in a counseling capacity and one hour a week as a client. This coupled with weekly supervision meetings in which audiotapes of sessions are critiqued, can provide valuable counseling experiences in a more secure situation, while at the same time preparing the student for his/her first contact with an actual client. This situation can also be another critical step in the process of self-analysis in which the student begins to explore the array of emotions associated with counseling, the unknowns, the feelings of insecurity, and determining if he/she has made an appropriate choice in choosing counseling as a profession. The role of supervisor becomes one of providing feedback as to whether the counselor is effectively employing counseling skills reflecting an integration of theory and practice based on the specific needs of the client.

The second component of hands-on counseling involves sessions with actual clients. For student counselors, this writer believes that it is necessary for counseling sessions to either be directly observed by the supervisor using oneway mirrors, or that sessions be recorded through the use of videotapes. Client welfare, as always, is of great concern and can be accurately monitored by the supervisor if one of the above methods is employed. At the same time the skills of the student counselor can be monitored, critiqued, and therefore can be further enhanced. To compliment this process, this writer believes that students should also be required to observe each other and provide critiques. It is believed that viewing sessions from an external perspective can offer valuable insights into the counseling process and stimulate the observer to examine areas of conflict and strength in his/her own sessions.

This process fosters introspection and development of one's own model of counseling and is integral to the counselor-in-training.

SUPERVISION

The above discussion has already explored some of the many issues involved in supervision. Supervision is defined as: "an intensive, interpersonally focused, one-to-one relationship in which one person is designated to facilitate the development of therapeutic competence in the other person" (Loganbill et al., 1982,p.4). It is clearly important for supervisors to determine whether students have a broad understanding of a variety of theories relative to counseling, that they have had opportunities to practice techniques, are aware of their ethical responsibilities, and have opportunities for hands-on experiences in the form of counseling experiences. In addition, Loganbill et.al. (1982) have provided a summary of issues relative to the supervisory process. These issues include: competence; emotional awareness; autonomy; theortical identity; respect for individual differences; purpose and direction; personal motivation; and, professional ethics. They believe that counselors-in-training tend to progress through a three stage process involving stagnation, confusion, and then integration, in which the above issues are explored. This is the self-growth process which has been eluded to previously. Through a process of focusing on techniques, moving to a stage of self-disclosure, and then to a stage of student exploration, the supervisor serves a function of facilitating this self-growth. Timing is important and the supervisor needs to be aware of the stage of growth the counselor-in-training is at. Self-growth is further facilitated through the provision of criticisms and recommendations, the creation of an atmosphere of understanding, support, and reassurance, and

finally, providing an opportunity for counselors-in-training to express their feelings, ideas, fears, and questions. In a sense, the opportunities counselors-in-training are exposed to is a recapitulation of the process of therapy that clients progress through.

Initially the novice counselor may have difficulty in putting into practice the techniques that they have been role playing and practicing during classes. Critiques of sessions in which examples of more appropriate uses of techniques are then provided by the supervisor to ease the transition from simulation to actual counseling situations. The concept of reflecting feelings back to a client may need constant feedback and continual examples of appropriate reflections.

As the student becomes more involved in the process of counseling there seems to be a tendency for students to become insecure about their role as counselors and the limits of their abilities. This writer believes that this is a normal part of self-exploration as one begins the process of discovering their individual philosophy of counseling. To ease the anxiety that arises from this process, supervisors could use self-disclosure to acknowledge that anxiety is a typical reaction but not as a means of easing the feelings of self-doubt or insecurity. It is believed that this is an important part of the growth process. As the student becomes more secure with their role as a counselor the supervisor can give more freedom to the student to explore different directions pertaining to the counseling situation while at the same time continually monitoring the sessions to insure the client's welfare.

Though the above issues may create much discomfort for the novice counselor, this writer believes they are necessary. As mentioned at the begining of this paper it is important for counselors to have an understanding of oneself and the complex issues one is dealing with. Whether these issues

are explored through therapy with another counselor or as a function of a counselor education program, they are believed to be necessary. To summarize, the following is an outline of the various components believed to be integral to the enhancement of counselor effectiveness:

- Theoretical Background
  - Counseling theorys
  - Psychological foundations
- Experiential Learning
  - Professor/Supervisor: Modeling of theories
  - Student: Role-playing of theories/techniques
  - Self-exploration exercises/simulations
  - Daily journal
  - Interviews with professionals in the community
- Ethical Considerations
  - Confidentiality
  - Vicarious liability
  - Violent clients/Duty to warn
  - Self-destructive clients
- Hands-On Counseling
  - Practicum A -
    - Graduate students counseling each other
    - Audiotapes critiqued by supervisor
    - Journal of sessions
    - Journal indicating personal growth
    - Present tapes to practicum for critiques
  - Practicum B -
    - Actual clients
    - Videotapes/Observations of sessions
    - Graduate students observing each other
    - Critiques from both supervisor and peers
    - Present tapes to practicum for critiques
    - Journal of sessions
    - Journal of critiques from supervisor and peers
    - Journal of personal growth
  - Internship experience

It is believed to be essential that the practicum sessions be a time in which students are compelled to present tapes of their sessions in order to obtain critiques from both supervisor and peers. This process of providing critiques to peers will also enhance one's own counseling abilities through the sharing of a variety of perspectives. It is important for counselors-in-training to have numerous opportunities to receive feedback

regarding their counseling sessions. Critiques should come from direct supervision of counseling sessions by supervisors and peers as well as through in-class presentations of specific cases. The critiques by supervisors, in particular, and by peers, provide valuable information relative to the evaluation of one's abilities as a counselor.

Pertaining to evaluation, it is believed that student counselors should be exposed to videotaped excerpts of counseling sessions and then asked to respond as a counselor. Their ability to evaluate what has already transpired during the session and their ability to demonstrate how they would continue the session would be evaluated. Integral is their ability to integrate both theory and practice into a quasicounseling session.

These components are believed to be "musts" to be included in every counselor education program. The primary concern in every counselor education program should focus on client welfare, and every attempt should be made to facilitate counselor growth through competency-based evaluation, ultimately leading to counselor effectiveness.

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